

## May 2016 subject reports

### Art History

#### Overall grade boundaries

##### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 12	13 - 24	25 - 36	37 - 50	51 - 65	66 - 79	80 - 100

#### Standard level internal assessment

##### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 32

#### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work submitted for this component varied in range and quality, as usual, and the majority of candidates had pursued a successful cross-cultural comparison as mandated in the nature of the task. Gratifyingly, there were a fewer instances this year of candidates not conducting a proper comparison, which suggests that teachers are reading and benefitting from the observations made in previous years' reports regarding the need for guidance and clarity in ensuring that candidates adhere to the requirements for this component. However, there were a limited number of instances where candidates did not perform adequate cross-cultural comparisons of artworks, suggesting that a lack of teacher guidance in terms of the suitability of the work still remains an issue, though a minor one. Candidates tackled a broad range of subjects, focusing on examples from different cultures. More successful essays had a clear and relatively narrow focus, e.g. looking in depth at the work of a specific artist in relation to a different culture. More carefully worded questions helped candidates to embark on a clear line of argument, leading to a more focused and reasoned response to the line of inquiry, as opposed to simply describing selected work or restating historical facts.

As the nature of the task in this component has gone unchanged for several years now, many of the observations made below are the same or very similar to those made in previous years' reports.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Visual Analysis

As in previous years, many candidates performed quite well in this area and just as often gave visual analysis even more emphasis than warranted by the overall weighting. Stronger students often made clear and specific links between the formal, observable qualities of selected works and others. Weaker students usually didn't go beyond simple description and often showed evidence of being significantly challenged in pinpointing and discussing similarities and differences in the works they selected. Some candidates discussed artistic form with great assurance, but there was a noticeable increase in the number of candidates who found the use of specialised vocabulary a challenge.

An issue still persists in that a number of candidates insist on quoting sources in reference to visual analysis. As stated in previous reports, the *visual* analysis of critics is of no interest to the examiners and candidates are advised to bring in the opinions of art historians in other contexts rather than in visual analysis. Candidates should be encouraged to remember that ideal visual analysis is their own assessment of the work, not someone else's.

### Context and evaluation

As with visual analysis (above) this criterion was addressed with a wide variety of levels of success in this year's exam but success in establishing quality contextual analysis was not as common as with the visual. Stronger candidates showed insight into the nature of the relationships that exist between differing contexts and were able to draw some meaning and conclusions from such comparisons. Weaker responses often referenced historical issues only in a cursory manner, in an effort to establish a basic connection to an artist or a historical event, or not at all.

Candidates need to be reminded during their development of their IA work to discuss historical context with reference to the guiding question(s) that they have selected. Higher achieving candidates are able to present a clear balance of both formal and contextual considerations to support their discussions, fulfilling the requirement of 'perceptive analysis' and drawing conclusions that support their ultimate thesis. Weaker candidates usually misunderstand or disregard the general framework or the time period and culture ("original context") in which the works in question were created or confuse them with what they have come to be understood as meaning today.

Finally, it continues to be important for teachers to reiterate that this component represents an ideal opportunity for candidates to bring to bear a great deal of what they have gleaned from their experiences in Theory of Knowledge (TOK) classes, especially as they struggle to deal with problems of knowledge as they relate to the areas of knowledge associated with the Human Sciences. As in the previous year's report, it was noted that in the IA work submitted this year, there was often too little discussion of the problems of knowing about meaning and

function of artworks within the original context within which they were created. Too many candidates' essays gave the impression that there really are no problems of knowing and understanding meaning and function in a historical context at all, when, in fact, the exact opposite is true.

### Evaluation of sources

Given that this is a research project, the demonstration of effective reference to sources is essential. Stronger candidates used a range of printed and digital-based sources effectively, with a good balance of print and web-based works. A few even conducted interviews, sought out transcripts and referenced letters and other records as primary sources, which is to be commended. Many candidates, however, had a very limited selection of references, and there was often no real critical engagement with them. Most candidates failed to explicitly demonstrate well-reasoned interpretation, different views or personal opinion.

Some candidates (a slightly higher number this year than in previous years – a cause for some concern) continued to cite sources in their bibliography that were, ultimately, neither cited nor mentioned in the body of their text. Citing a work in a bibliography and referring to it critically in the main body of the text, as the assessment model envisages, is not the same thing, though many candidates believe that it is. As a general rule, if a work is not cited in the essay, the candidate should, in most cases, exclude it in the bibliography. Conversely, if a source is cited in the bibliography, the candidate should ensure that it be referenced in the essay itself.

As mentioned in relation to visual analysis (above), some candidates felt that simply referring to or quoting a source in relation to the description of an artwork is sufficient use of academic citation, when it is not.

Lesser achieving candidates, at times, had as few as four sources in their list of works referenced, which is woefully inadequate.

Additionally, some candidates relied quite heavily on stock art history texts (Jansen, Gardner, Stokstad, Fleming, etc.) for a large number of their citations and references. While these are fine texts for overall knowledge and general understanding, they should be discouraged as prime sources for the kind of thorough academic study that the nature of the task for this component demands.

In applying their knowledge and awareness of the sources they select, higher achieving candidates were able to show that they understood that truth and facts in art history are often elusive and that academics and historians often disagree as to these. The best responses, therefore, were those that brought varied and/or opposing points of view together for consideration and then offered up a personal opinion or judgment on the issue, citing reasons and evidence where appropriate. In this way, it was clear that higher achieving candidates were more able to demonstrate a comprehensive appreciation of their sources, taking a more mature, scholarly approach, with a clear sense of their own interpretation and opinion evident in the discussion. Lower scoring candidates often merely paid lip service to sources, mentioning them in passing reference without making any solid ties between the nature of the contribution the source makes and the overall investigation the candidate is conducting.

## Research, planning and presentation

Most candidates this year were successful in formulating and executing a proper cross-cultural comparison in the history of visual expression. There remain however some instances of lack of planning and adequate research to the task assigned, which suggests that there are still some teachers that need to provide more guidance to their students in this regard.

Regarding presentation, it was generally observed by examiners that, overall, presentation was of a good- to high-quality, with proficient use of formatting tools and inclusion of clear and effective images being the norm rather than the exception. While some candidates could, at times, lose points when the quality of their research itself was poor, with little clear sense of a systematic approach to the cross-cultural aspects, they could often score points with a high level of presentation.

There were a number of investigations that featured poor, few or even no illustrations or supporting visuals. In today's world of high speed digital sharing of information, fidelity and availability of reproductions and quality and speed of printed matter, there simply is no excuse for the inclusion of poor quality (or the entire lack of) illustrations, as was sometimes the case. In this discipline, where the visual arts throughout history are the focus of study, an emphasis should be on the "visual." The inclusion of good quality imagery to support the main points of the candidate's thesis should be made absolutely *de rigueur*.

Ideally, candidates should be encouraged to select for this investigation at least one artwork that they can examine first-hand. The benefits of having experienced artworks personally, of bringing to bear one's own observational skills upon an actual work, cannot be overstated. The majority of higher achieving essays included works which the candidates availed themselves of personally.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should embark on the IA in good time with early internal deadlines for the first draft, so that there is no excuse for handing in an essay without a bibliography, without illustrations, or with too few sources, etc. Teachers should continue to share assessment criteria with candidates from the outset, so they are aware of the weighting of the various criteria and thus the need to get the right balance of the requirements. Some teachers should endeavour to be more precise in how they apply the mark bands of the criteria in assessing the essays, both at the first draft stage and when they come to submit their final marks for their students' work.
- Pursuant to that noted above, teachers themselves might benefit greatly by thoroughly reviewing the requirements of this component (the nature of the task) and familiarizing themselves with the four assessment criteria so that they can accurately share expectations, from the outset, with their students. They might seek to establish their own best-practice model, maintaining a growing library of previous years' IA essays and sharing these with their students, developing a bibliography of exemplar sources and fostering a culture of critical awareness in their lessons that regularly makes use of proper terminology, description, formal analysis and contextual evaluation. Some teachers need to make efforts to ensure that special attention is paid to the development of appropriate, *cross-cultural* comparisons in the visual arts.

- Teachers should make individual candidate guidance a priority in their preparation for this component. The key to a successful comparative essay begins with a proper guiding question, a line of inquiry for this task – one that can, eventually, be answered in as clear and unambiguous a manner as possible. Conversely, candidates should be discouraged from taking on subjects that are so broad that a single guiding question fails to apply. What conclusions can a candidate possibly derive from a line of inquiry that fails to pose any questions? Therefore, an essay entitled “An Examination of the Works of Claude Monet” (for example) does not lend itself well to addressing this component.
- It is often the case that the most interesting essays involve comparing some of the most widely disparate works (many from outside the western canon of art history). Additionally, teachers might find it useful to encourage a certain personal link on the candidate's part to the essay. A majority of the most engaging written submissions in recent years focused on comparing artworks, objects or traditions that had personal meaning/relevance for the candidate. Focus on the criteria-based expectations should not be overlooked in this, however. Teachers need to bear in mind the IA requirements and keep their candidates on task accordingly, both before the students begin writing and when reviewing them after submission. Teachers need to keep in mind that they may (and should) advise on the candidate's first draft.

## Standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

As in previous years, most candidates were able to make at least an adequate attempt at visual analysis and to make use of a few basic art historical terms relating to form, style or technique. However, a not insignificant number of them had difficulty in defining what the original context for a work might have been or failed to address this aspect of the task at all. Some found it a challenge to go beyond repeating statements that they had learned from their teachers or other sources. Some found it an even greater challenge to discuss the possible meaning or meanings of works of art beyond simple symbolism or iconographic readings. As we have seen in past exams, there was a basic difficulty for many candidates in trying to communicate why there might be a problem in establishing an accurate context for some works of art and then of interpreting the meaning of the work in that context.

The most frequently occurring problem for candidates in this component continues to lie in differentiating between the two questions. While a higher percentage of candidates followed instructions and wrote two distinct essays, there was often repetition between the two responses. It was commonplace for candidates to answer question 1 with a discussion of visual analysis and then go on to repeat much of what they had said in their answer to question 2. Similarly many candidates made comments about meaning, significance and context in their first response (to the question about formal analysis) and then repeated much of what they had said again in their second response (which should address context, meaning and significance).

A fewer number of candidates this year seemed to struggle with finding a balance between attempting to recite what in many cases seemed to be a memorised list of facts about a work, and working these into their own observations and analysis, but this does continue to be a matter of concern. It seemed that many of these candidates were eager to tell what they knew, as opposed to how they knew it or why they thought that way, clearly allowing their responses to be guided by a bulleted series of conclusions that were unsupported by the rest of their answer. This suggests that some form of preparation (or coaching) is occurring in some cases, but without the appropriate level of formal and contextual discussion of selected works that would enable candidates to demonstrate real understanding with holistic, well-organised responses.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

As ever, the best-prepared candidates were able to both describe and analyse the formal aspects of their chosen artwork and then comment specifically on style, techniques used and materials employed. They were able to establish a convincing context for their chosen work with reference to specific historical, social, political or economic events (many included relevant dates) and to explore the problems and limitations of trying to interpret these works within that context. Most candidates were able to show that they understood that they were expected to address both formal and contextual issues surrounding their selected works and most made efforts to ensure that both of these tasks were addressed. Most understood that the works selected had a meaning and a function within their respective contexts, but some had difficulty discussing these.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The number of candidates erroneously answering the individual questions with reference to two different topic artworks was very low this year, suggesting that teacher guidance and exam preparation for following the directions for this component are being given appropriate attention.

A separate note is required for each of the topic questions:

**Topic 1: *Pergamon Altar* (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).** Photograph of a portion of the original structure as reconstructed in the Pergamonmuseum der Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Many candidates preferred to respond to this work, though in many ways it presented one of the more difficult challenges. Some candidates recognized that this work offered them the choice of discussing the architecture of the altar or the sculpture program or both. Most were quick to point out the architectural order at work (Ionic) and that the entire structure exists to manipulate approach of space. They were able to identify aspects of Hellenistic architecture and the dramatic use of space and elevation that characterise this almost theatrical building. Some recognized aspects of Classical influence as well and offered evidence for how this was the case. A few more astute responses discussed the use of encaustic paint and the technicolour decoration that would have been originally applied. A very small number of candidates examining the sculpture were able to actually name and describe specific gods and goddesses and discuss their roles in the stories depicted, which was impressive. The stronger responses attempted to show awareness of diverse explanations of the altar's political, social and religious functions and a few of these were able to enumerate a number of them. Best answers explored aspects of the various sculptural themes (Gigantomachy, Life of Telephus, etc.) and sought to make links between these and the motivations of the Attalid rulers who erected the altar as propaganda. A few weaker answers simply described the work and made efforts to attribute it to Alexander the Great.

**Topic 2: *Portrait of a Man* (c. 100–120 CE).** Mummy portrait from Hawara, Egypt; Roman period. British Museum, London.

This was a moderately popular choice for answers this year. The best responses to this work carefully described the image and identified that style of the piece as that of the second century, pointing out links between this work and the typical *veristic* work of the Roman empire at the time. A few of these went on to discuss the technique used (encaustic) and a few also attempted to draw stylistic links with both Roman portraiture and Ptolemaic Egyptian works done contemporaneously. Many noted that the beard and drapery were distinctly Trajanic and that the portraitist may have been somewhat formulaic in approach, working to a type rather than seeking to get an actual likeness. The better candidates were able to identify the subject as an affluent, upper-class Roman who died in Egypt, and made efforts to point out visual clues, such as the *clavus*, as indicators of this fact. A few of the best responses explored aspects of the hybrid Roman/Egyptian culture of that context and drew links between this and formal aspects of the portrait, allowing for some varied theories on interpretation and identification. Weaker answers described what was obvious from the image and made little or no effort to explore its context.

**Topic 3: *Symbols of the Four Evangelists* (c. 800 CE).** Folio 27v from the *Book of Kells*. Trinity College Library, Dublin.

No candidates responded to this work.

Topic 4: Wiligelmo, *Adam and Eve* (c. 1110). Marble relief. West façade, Modena Cathedral.

No candidates responded to this work.

Topic 5: Hieronymus Bosch, "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*" (c. 1500–1505). Oil on panel. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

There were many responses that addressed this Renaissance work. It was understood by all examiners that candidates might choose to focus on certain aspects of the reproduction rather than being expected to know about all the details of the work. Weaker responses tended to vaguely describe aspects of the overall work (including how the work appeared when closed) and then to provide a list of iconographic readings that were usually presented as fact without consideration of possible alternative readings or interpretations. Higher quality answers involved both materials and techniques in the first part of their response and related Bosch's use of oils on panel to the fine details, sumptuous colours, etc. A few even made mention of Bosch's innovative use of materials to add brilliance and lustre to his work. A small number of highly informed candidates offered possible models for Bosch's use of imagery (such as the tree-man figure and the giraffe). While weaker responses could only identify the general scenes, higher achieving candidates were able to discuss a variety of interpretations of the work and acknowledged that little is understood for certain regarding the artist's specific intentions. Some better answers referred directly to some of the more prominent theories postulated by Panofsky, Beagle, Dixon, etc. The better of these responses offered personal opinion with evidence provided for their conclusions. A few achieved additional points for having discussed possible patronage issues and provenance of the work (King Phillip II of Spain obtained it for the royal collection in Madrid), and made links between these facts and its place within the genre of religious art of the North at the time.

Topic 6: Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (c.1614–1620). Oil on canvas, National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples.

With Topic 7 (below) this was by far one of the most popular choices for candidates. Artemisia Gentileschi's painting garnered a variety of levels of response. Most candidates had no problem identifying the main characters in the image and establishing its Biblical source. More than a few were able to cite Gentileschi's use of oil and her *tenebreism*, with a few of the better responses giving a nod to Caravaggio and the Baroque style that led to use of extreme lighting contrasts, diagonal compositions and dramatic content that characterized counter-reformation painting. Some of the less accomplished answers pointed out the artists' compositional adherence to the diagonal lines without really discussing the many other key artistic choices that Gentileschi made in this image that really sets her apart from other prominent painters of her era (Caravaggio included). Many fixated on that fact that she was a woman in a man's world and devoted most of their response to various degrees of feminist criticism of the 16<sup>th</sup> century world, which certainly figures in this work but, nevertheless, is not the *only* contextual issue to explore. In addition to discussing Artemisia's possible motivations for focusing on this violent image of female retribution and revenge (her rape case, her father's role in her own training and introducing her to her rapist, Agostino Tassi, long-simmering mistrust of and frustration with the male-dominated Academia in Florence, etc.) some higher achieving

answers also explored issues of possible patronage for this image (possibly Cosimo II) and how she might have come to be influenced by Caravaggio's work.

**Topic 7: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing* (1767). Oil on canvas. Wallace Collection, London.**

As mentioned above, there were a high number of responses to this image, most of which easily identified the work and attempted to describe it as representative of French Rococo painting. A number of respondents noted that Fragonard's image was actually quite small in size. Many candidates were able to mention in their responses aspects of Rococo painting present in the work, such as the pastel colours, the S-curve composition, feathery brushstrokes built up in layers, etc. Some candidates rather astutely pointed out some of the subtler and more complex details of the work Fragonard included (the cupid statue, the cherubs, the flying shoe and the barking dog) as evidence of Rococo symbolism. Most of the weaker answers began with a cursory overview of the frivolity of French aristocratic life and then proceeded directly to a description of the image, focusing on the provocative character of the situation, the general role of the three main figures shown and the insinuated deception on the part of the young female on the swing. This is where most of the lesser achieving responses usually either ended or became lost in lurid suppositions about the nature of the sexual relationship and duplicity that the artist is merely suggesting. It was clear in some repeated cases that candidates were reciting interpretations they had gleaned from their teachers or from assigned readings that were, at best, speculative analysis and, at worst, sensationalized fantasies. Some of the better answers avoided overstatement of the obvious and cited various readings suggested by art historians, allowing for informed personal opinion to make their argument more eloquent.

A surprising number of candidates confused stories of the patronage of the artist with regard to this painting (Charles Collé recorded that it was originally suggested to the artist Gabriel-Francois Doyen by a man who wanted a bishop portrayed in the background pushing his mistress on the swing, but Doyen passed the idea on to Fragonard afterwards) with actual figures in the work. A few very well-informed candidates also knew that it has been suggested that the patron was the Baron de Saint-Julien, the Receiver General of the French Clergy, and used this as a means of linking the apparent duplicitousness and sexuality represented in the work to known members of the French aristocracy (and the clergy in particular) at a time of frivolity and general misbehaviour in the prevailing culture of decadence and aristocratic ennui that characterized the late reign of Louis XIV.

**Topic 8: Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise* (1872). Oil on canvas. Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.**

A somewhat popular choice for candidates, most candidates identified Monet's image as being quite small in size, with a distinctive fore- middle- and background. Some were quick to point out the chimneys and cranes along the seafront in the background as evidence of industrialization. Some of the sharper candidates observed that the vantage point depicted here suggests that Monet was painting *plein aire* and that he must have been using individual tubes of paint, which were introduced in France after 1855. Even the most undeveloped of answers mentioned the large, bold brush strokes and use of intense colour evident here, but better answers made this a discussion point to relate the image to the developing style of Impressionism in the 1870's. That Monet may have been deliberately editing out homes on the

left side of the image (which is Le Havre, France) in an attempt to underscore the modern, industrial character of the burgeoning port town was mentioned by a few very well prepared candidates. The best answers incorporated theories by historians such as Tucker, Patin and Lyon and discussed how this work may embody some of Monet's feelings towards his own country and its future after the loss of the Franco-Prussian War.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should continue to encourage candidates to write in distinct paragraphs and to remind them that, ideally, each paragraph should embody a specific thought or a number of closely related thoughts.
- Teachers should be reminded to continue to encourage their students to address the two questions, (a) and (b), in separate, distinct essays. Students who attempt to answer both questions in a continuous essay invariably fail to address the questions adequately (or lose track of what they are trying to say).
- Teachers should continue to emphasize the importance of following the directions and referencing the same topic in both of their responses. Candidates' responses that reference more than one topic in Paper 1 will only gain half marks, or, if two topics are referenced in the answer to the same question, will be discounted.
- Teachers would do well to ensure that students understand the distinctions between the two questions and the nature of what each of them asks.
- As noted in previous reports (and still very valid), to do well on this task candidates need to be able to learn to analyse and dissect the visual components of works of art – they should be taught how to do this in class, avoiding formulaic approaches to learning this skill while emphasizing that a personal connection can and should be made with the work. Training the eye by practicing on works of art with which the candidates are unfamiliar is the best way of doing this.
- Candidates should be encouraged (by their art history teacher and their TOK instructor) to make links between what they learn in art history and what they learn about the problems of knowledge in TOK. This can only help students understand more the problems of knowing about a context in the past and the difficulties in interpreting the meaning of a work produced in that context.
- Teachers should, whenever possible, highlight the fact that art historians can (and do, often) come to different conclusions about the same works of art. Teachers should encourage students to get engaged with the question when this happens and to draw their own conclusions based upon their understanding of as much of the contextual evidence and scholarship as they can uncover.
- It is recommended that candidates, whenever possible, be given the opportunity to practice with past paper writing. By practicing answering papers in class, possibly under mock exam conditions, it is hoped that candidates will become more familiar with the expectations of the exam instructions and questions, and this should help reinforce better handwriting skills, minimizing problems with legibility and basic essay structuring.

## Standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 29	30 - 36	37 - 48

### The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

In the past two to three years, the number of candidates significantly referencing two or more different topics in a single response was cause for concern. This year's exam saw those number continue to decline, but it was evident that a small number of candidates were not being given adequate guidance in this regard. The overall majority of teachers appear to have prepared students by familiarising them with the directions and expectations prior to the real exam. Only a small number (estimates are less than 3 percent) of those taking this exam failed to follow the directives as stated, which resulted in their gaining only partial credit for their overall Paper 2 mark. Thus, following instructions remains an issue in this component but one that can obviously be addressed with appropriate preparation of candidates.

Encouragingly, very few candidates erroneously answered more than one question from one of the five specific themes, suggesting, again, that candidates in general are being better prepared for following directions in the exam. It was similarly good to note that fewer candidates suffered from attempting to draw upon too many examples in their responses, as has been an issue in the past. Candidates should continue to be encouraged to narrow their focus to two or three carefully selected examples in their responses and confine their analysis to these only.

The proper use of dates remains an issue that a vast majority of candidates still find challenging. As stated in the previous report, Art History is a study of art through the ages, and the use of proper dates and terminology is fundamental to the discipline. A number of candidates found using appropriate dates and titles, as well as art-related vocabulary in their essays, challenging, which suggests that teachers should emphasize the importance of these in the future.

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

It remains apparent that there had been widespread preparation of candidates in relation to topics 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the syllabus. Topics 3 and 4 seemed not to be covered by any of the centres. Topics 7 and 8 are receiving a moderate frequency of instruction worldwide.

As we have seen in previous years, at the highest levels, the better-prepared candidates had been introduced to texts by different art historians who considered the same artworks but arrived at different conclusions. The awareness that two or more art historians had considered the same questions in relation to the same works of art but offered different answers was key for most of the well prepared candidates. They were able to consider different points of view and take a critical approach to these sources in their responses. These candidates were familiar with how art historians have tried to piece together evidence to define what might have been the historical, social, political or economic context of works from different periods and cultures. They were able to use art historical terms with clarity and ease. They were familiar with what was denoted by key terms such as style, form, iconography, patronage, techniques and materials, but were also aware of the ambiguities or connotations of these terms. The best-prepared candidates appreciated the difficulty of knowing with certainty what, for example, a work of art may be said to have meant in its original context.

Quite a few candidates were well prepared to describe the works they had selected for discussion and recalled, with quite specific detail, many of the significant aspects of form that they presented. This suggests thorough exposure to images and regular reference to details that can only result from teacher-led discussion and study.

Finally, as noted in the IA and Paper 1 reports, some less impressive preparation was evident this year in that a number of the candidates (especially within certain centres) had selected the same artworks for their Paper 2 responses that they had focused on for their Internal Assessment essay and Paper 1 responses. As noted in the reports (above) this suggests that they are trying to consolidate their knowledge, which, to them, might appear pragmatic and sensible, but only serves to highlight the narrow breadth of understanding and knowledge that they have ultimately gleaned from their study of art history. It also imposes strict limitations on their opportunities to expand their understanding and discover for themselves new areas of art history that they have not studied in class. Therefore, this kind of preparation is not conducive to the aims of this course of study and should be avoided.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

The breadth and variety of questions in this component this exam session was similar to those of recent years and, as in previous exam sessions, left candidates a great deal of freedom both in interpretation and strategy of approach. The spread of responses for each of the ten questions from the entire pool of candidates was somewhat less evenly distributed than in previous years, with questions 1, 2, 4 and 7 being most popular choices for response and questions 3, 8 and 10 generally, though not entirely, avoided.

**Question 1:** Choose two works, each one by a different artist, from one topic area that show different individual styles but share similar features of a period style. Discuss these similarities and differences.

This question asked the candidate to consider a period style and to distinguish between common features of that style. The two works selected needed to be properly identified by title and artist. Most respondents were able to do this but a small but not insignificant number of candidates lost points for neglecting to do so. Candidates had to demonstrate that they had the ability to analyse formal qualities of line and shape, tone, colour, texture, or pattern and the distinctive ways in which these elements are deployed in the examples they selected. They then had to offer evidence to support ideas of how the physical, cultural, social, political, or economic context, within which the works were produced, may have influenced the similarities and differences that they are describing in that period style. Further to this, they had to be able to use subject specific vocabulary relevant to the discussion of style and formal qualities. The best candidates had a familiarity with key art historians associated with the ideas about distinguishing the development in style over time, such as Vasari (Topic 5), Winckelmann (Topic 1), and Wölfflin (Topics 5 and 6).

**Question 2:** Discuss one work of art or architecture within the cultural context in which it was created, with specific reference to two of the following:

- use of line
- surface quality (texture)
- use of contrast
- use of colour
- use of scale.

This question asked the candidate to explain how the cultural context within which the work selected was produced, impacted the two formal elements that they were describing. A quality response depended upon the candidate being aware of the fact that explanations of context, subject matter and meaning are only useful when they are directly related to discussion of the chosen formal elements. The work selected needed to be properly identified by title and artist. Again, most respondents were able to do this but a small but not insignificant number of candidates lost points for neglecting to do so. Better answers were achieved by candidates who wisely selected the most appropriate two formal elements to examine in light of the work they had selected and, in turn, discussed how the context in which the work was produced led him/her to select the two chosen formal elements. The hidden challenge in this question was in the way it reversed the usual process of analysis whereby candidates first describe the formal aspects of the work and then discuss its meaning and function in its original context. It also allowed candidates an opportunity to make direct links between specific aspects of form that might either characterize an artist's style or the style of a particular period of time and to discuss why this is so. Higher achieving answers were able to do so.

**Question 3:** With reference to two works from one topic area, each from a different artist, discuss whether the signs and symbols used in them are characteristic of the artists' own personal iconography or of an iconography typical of their time period.

This question, to which only a handful of candidates responded, asked them to consider the difference between personal iconography and period iconography, which can be, in itself, a rather daunting task in any topic period. The chosen works had to be clearly identified by title and name and come from the same topic. Most candidates chose a work that was typical or mainstream in its use of imagery and another that reflected a more personal approach to imagery by a particular artist. Interestingly, a few included patrons/advisors in this comparison. Some picked a work that represented an unusual or even unprecedented use of iconography but which appeared to have established a new norm, which they then illustrated in their second example. Some higher achieving candidates highlighted where there were problems in determining whether a particular element was symbolic or not or whether there is justification in thinking that a particular element possessed a defined meaning. A very few superb answers showed familiarity with texts and writings that have shaped the study of iconography and meaning (Panofsky, Mâle and Gombrich were cited).

**Question 4:** With reference to one work of art or architecture, examine how understanding the meaning of signs and symbols within it enhances our understanding of the work, ("signs and symbols" are anything within the work itself that gives the work meaning).

This was perhaps the most commonly answered response. Again, the selected work had to be properly identified by artist and title, and weaker candidates lost points in neglecting to do so. The question allows for a broad understanding of "signs and symbols" across the various topic periods. Many lesser achieving candidates saw this question merely as an invitation to reel off a list of iconographic readings of an artwork with which they were familiar. Few of these actually got to the part of the question where it asks them to discuss how knowledge of such readings enhanced their understanding of the work. Higher achieving responses involved the knowledge and use of existing art historical analysis and opinion as well as personal insight and creative interpretation. Those achieving the highest marks for the question showed intimate knowledge of their selected work and presented neatly organized, well-argued answers that demonstrated clear use of a range of art historical texts, art theory, criticism and documentary sources, as well as their own awareness of art and architecture.

**Question 5:** Select two works from one topic area, each one by a different artist, that each served a different function within the same historical period. Discuss to what extent these functions are characteristic of the work produced by these artists and for the time and place in which they worked.

The works selected had to be properly identified by artist and title. It was clear in the number of responses that many candidates were familiar with discussions of art and architecture from various periods as propaganda, and many of them selected these as at least one if not both of their examples for their answer (weaker answers often used two works of propaganda as examples of works fulfilling two different functions). But the question requires candidates to consider two differing functions within the same historical period. There were, of course,

numerous possible ways to make this contrast. Some better quality responses used works of propaganda as well as works that criticize a powerful ruler or patron to draw a clear distinction between functions. Many of the lesser achieving responses stopped after making the comparison between the two works selected, but the second half of the question invited candidates to set their examples in context in particular ways and to make reference, even if briefly, to other works by the same artists or from the same period. Higher achieving respondents were able to do so. Similarly, these stronger candidates were clearly aware of the variety of functions for which art and architectural works have been produced - propaganda, satire, commemoration, devotion (public or private), entertainment, instruction, etc. Several of the best answers discussed the nature of these roles and their differences as well.

**Question 6:** It has been said by feminist scholars and others that the history of art has been dominated by men who see women as sexual objects. Discuss this claim with reference to two works from one topic area in which women have been depicted by men.

This question asked candidates to operate within a specific agenda (feminism) and to demonstrate their abilities to discuss a stated feminist claim with reference to two works, which needed to be properly identified by artist and title. It was not necessary that the selected works themselves depict women as sexual objects, though this was the avenue that most candidates chose in formulating their response. Most of the weaker responses to this question came from candidates who attempted to either prove or refute the relevance of feminism in the world at large, which is patently not what the question asks. Quite a few of these took the position that, since women were depicted as sexual objects in the two works they had selected, all artworks must therefore depict women in that manner – a small inductive leap which solid TOK studies might have helped them to avoid. A smaller number of candidates simply chose to select two works (or at least one of their two examples) in which “woman” is represented in some other way and used this to refute the claim, which was perfectly valid. Better answers demonstrated that the candidate was aware of the variety of ways in which women have been represented in history of art. The highest achieving candidates not only identified specific roles that have typified the representation of women in art, but also referenced existing scholarship on the issue. A rare few even discussed the advantages or disadvantages of the application of feminist theory in art history and offered a personal, informed opinion on the topic.

**Question 7:** Select two works of art, from one topic area, that demonstrate how different kinds of patronage have resulted in different kinds of artistic production (such as the use of different techniques or materials, or differing interpretations of the same subject). To what extent were these examples typical of art and patronage in the period you have chosen?

This question offered quite a considerable challenge in its complexity. First, it asked candidates to consider a variety of kinds of patronage and to then consider how these might have led to innovation in a chosen topic period. The second part of the question then asked them to put the works into context by considering the extent to which they typified or differed from the mainstream patronage of the period. Not only did the two works selected need to be clearly identified by title and artist's name and come from the same topic, but the candidate also needed to be able to identify the patron or patrons by name and demonstrate some knowledge of their role. Not surprisingly, most candidates who elected to respond to this question wrote

about a kind of patronage where a ruler commissioning the work of art or architecture wants some form of propaganda. Most, if not all respondents were able to do this. Indeed, the question allowed candidates to include one such example but further asked them to offer an example of an alternative kind of patronage and artistic production from within the same topic. This level of achievement was less common. Besides rulers acting as patrons, some candidates also discussed works commissioned by the clergy (Popes, Cardinals, etc.) and by private individuals or families for church settings (Renoir's patroness, Madame Charpentier was a common reference in many responses). Better quality answers came from a few candidates who were familiar with examples of more "enlightened" patronage where a collector was more interested in commissioning a work or works that reflected the individual style and/or ideas of a particular artist. Highest achieving responses contained specific references to evidence of interactions between artists and patrons such as contracts or details of arrangements between them and brought these to bear on their argument.

**Question 8: Select two works, from one topic area, by different artists or architects, suitable for inclusion in an exhibition entitled "Artists and their Patrons". For each, identify the patron/s and evaluate their role and influence in realizing the chosen work. (In the case of architecture it is presumed that drawings, photographs, or models of the work might be exhibited.)**

This question was not very popular with candidates this year, perhaps because it asked them to curate an imaginary exhibition, which might have been viewed as an intimidating task. The selected works, artists/architects and patrons needed to be clearly and accurately identified. It was not sufficient for a candidate to write about an artist's/architect's patron/client in general terms and some candidates did lose points for having neglected to specify one or all of these. Typically, candidates would refer, too vaguely, simply to "royalty" or "the Church" in reference to their examples. The question states "suitable for inclusion," which most candidates took to include fairly obvious and known examples where some form of patronage had been acknowledged in art historical research. Higher achieving responses contained some form of exploration of the nature of patronage and showed an understanding of the many roles and forms that patronage might take. Most importantly in their answer to this question, candidates had to discuss the patron's role in supporting/commissioning the chosen work, which some candidates were able to do. Weaker responses tended to get distracted or avoided focusing on the role of the patron to any degree of depth.

**Question 9: From one topic area, select one work that demonstrates the use of a material that was new to the period in which it was created, and one that demonstrates the use of a material that was already established in that period, but treated with a new technique. Evaluate which work is the more significant for your chosen art historical period.**

For this question candidates needed to be able to show factual knowledge of which were new materials and new techniques within the timeframe of a given topic. But they also needed to reflect on the significance of these facts within the study of the history of change in art, which requires intimate knowledge of the art of the period selected. The weaker responses to this question were from candidates who learned about the majority of the artworks they had studied from reproductions and think of them primarily as images, rather than as objects with a distinct material and physical nature resulting from a process of making. The better quality answers

showed a familiarity with the discussion not just of what was depicted or made, but with what and HOW it had been achieved. They demonstrated a knowledge and appreciation of the fact that completed works of art and architecture are the products of processes of working with particular materials and their limitations. The best of responses referenced scholarship that discussed this issue with regard to their selected works and offered up an informed personal opinion on the question as to which is more significant – the use of a material already in use but treated with a new technique, or the use of a new material.

**Question 10: Mass media and photographic reproduction have made certain works of art known to millions. Using two works from one topic area as examples, discuss the usefulness of reproductions when studying artistic techniques and the use of materials.**

This question was not a popular one, but produced a number of interesting responses. It asked candidates to consider how one is able to see (or not see) and study techniques and materials. It asked if reproductions and mass media are enhancing or detracting from that study. Good answers provided examples of both enhancing and detracting aspects but it was not necessary for the response to be equally balanced between enhancement and detracting. Some were able to cite useful/enhancing aspects such as easy access, ability to see work without travel, advantage of magnification to understand processes, X-rays to view underpainting, black and white photo exploration to see tonal contrasts, ability to see sculpture and architecture in different lights and viewpoints, exploring a variety of work by the same artist, etc. Some were able to cite detracting aspects that included artificial scale and colour variations, not being able to see the work in situ, missing what can be conveyed by simply “being in the presence” of the work, etc.

A number of the respondents to this question fundamentally misunderstood the question entirely, assuming that they were tasked with justifying the value of reproductions in disseminating knowledge of the existence of art in the world (as if this were the only way of learning of about artworks). Some even concluded that the study of art history IS the study of reproductions. However, as the *Nature of the Subject* suggests “first-hand experience of art works” is desirable, the higher achieving candidates’ arguments were strengthened if they were able to refer to images that they had seen both as an original work of art and in reproduction. Reference to such first-hand experience was in no way mandatory for achieving the highest marks, but typically, those achieving marks in the highest mark band did exactly that.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The number of candidates who failed to follow directions in the exam has continued to decline. Nevertheless, there remain some candidates who are not following instructions and this might suggest that they are not being adequately prepared for following the instructions and responding to the questions in this component in the proper fashion. Therefore it is important to reiterate that these questions are designed to test a candidate’s knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of visual arts and architecture throughout history (Sections A to E). One response is to draw upon imagery from one of the eight topics, while the other two responses are to draw upon

imagery from a different topic. This is to test the candidate's general awareness of art from more than just a narrow historical range or culture. It is absolutely necessary for candidates to respond in the prescribed manner so that the fullest evaluation of their performance against the syllabus material can be made. Candidates therefore should continue to be warned of the risk of not following these instructions, as only partial, or even no credit, is given for answers that do not comply with the above parameters. This is an issue that can be eradicated with simple, straightforward instruction and guidance by teachers. It is recommended that all teachers of this course make efforts to completely eradicate this tendency by the next (2017) exam session.

- As ever, examiners would like to see well-structured responses, which answer the questions offered; a wide-ranging knowledge of the context in which works of art were produced; deployment of a high level of visual analysis when describing works of art; complex ideas; argumentation backed up by appropriate sources (i.e. an awareness of what art historians and critics have written on the subject); and expression of the candidates' own personal opinions. To achieve this, it is essential that candidates read the individual questions carefully and answer them in their entirety.
  - It is highly recommended that teachers introduce their candidates to examples of art historians considering the same or similar questions in relation to similar or comparable works of art, but offering different answers. These should be presented as models for how the candidates themselves might formulate their own responses to the exam questions, as they could provide excellent insight and guidance into the nature of the art historical process.
  - As discussed above with regard to Paper 1, teachers should review the criteria used to assess the Paper 2 exam, familiarize themselves with the criteria and then share the same with their students. It is imperative that students understand the criteria and the expectations that go along with the various criteria in order to understand what they will need to do on the exam in order to achieve the highest mark bands.
  - Finally, it is important to remind teachers to familiarize themselves with what their students are learning in Theory of Knowledge classes, in order to help them to make practical connections between this subject and that part of the IB core. The idea of personal and shared knowledge is particularly appropriate and relevant to the discussion and study of art history. Similarly, problems of knowledge, especially those impacting the Human Sciences, are of tremendous importance to the discipline. Finding parallels between what students learn in both subjects will only enhance their experience in both classes and help to expand their own awareness and knowledge of the material being covered.
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